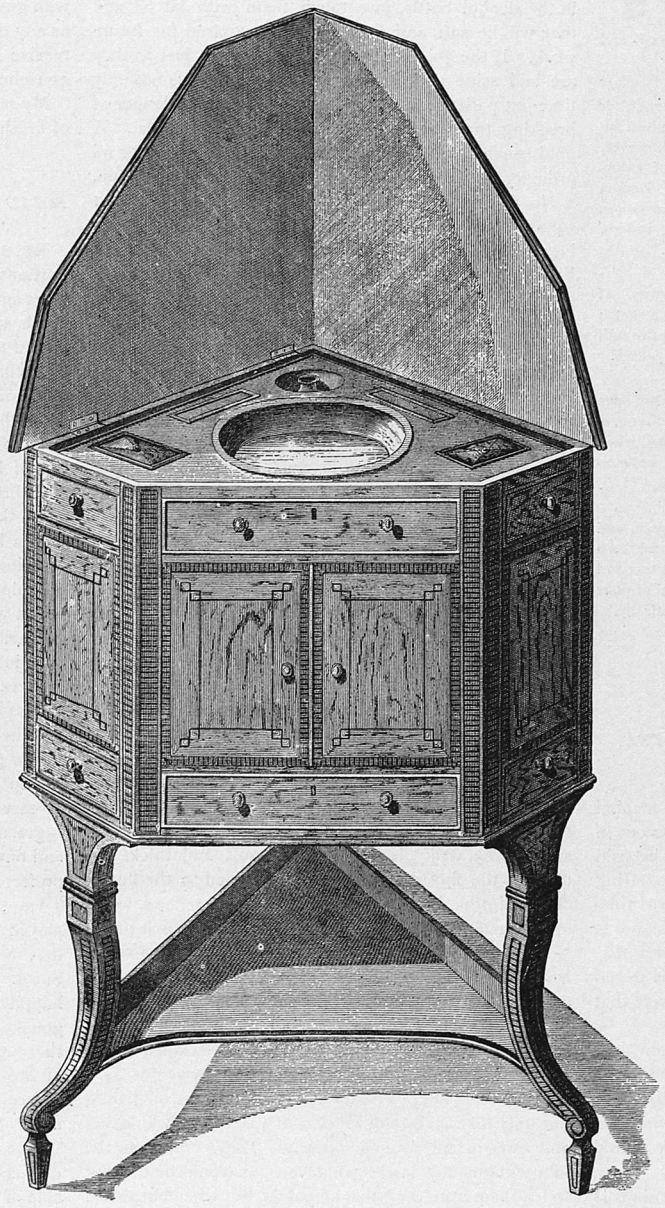
THE HOUSE

LAST CENTURY ENGLISH FURNITURE.

THE same conservatism and indifference to purity of style which I pointed out last month in Sheraton's window designs is to be found in a more marked degree in English furniture of the same period. But in wood-work the lingering of Gothic and early Renaissance principles of construction gave a repose of line and an appearance of stability and permanence often lacking in French furniture of the same time. French eighteenth-century furniture, though in reality very substantially built, is apt to have a fragile appearance, and every one knows that the grace and freedom of its curves are only to be had at the cost of a considerable loss of strength. In keeping to simpler and more rigid forms the English makers were preserving good traditions, and if their ornamental systems were seldom appropriate or in pure taste, at least good workmanship and careful finish cannot be denied them.

Among the accompanying designs of library furniture, the large bookcase, as will be seen by the plan, is very simple in construction; but what a hotch-potch the designer has made of Gothic-looking clustered columns, false pediment with ogive mouldings, and classic æroteria. The other bookcase, with open shelves alternating with closed cupboards, is again of sensible general design; but, though its proportions are much better, there is a mixture of ornamental motives which strikes the eye as incongruous. The pretty rococo crestings, to which, if cast in brass or gilt, no one need object as a finish for the top of the piece, are still not in keeping with the severe geometrical tracery of the panels. That of the two end cupboards especially is out of all harmony with the Chinese forms of their pediments.

In less elaborate pieces of furniture, however, a happier result was often arrived at. The pretty lady's writing-desk, with its simple inlay and bead moulding, is all that it should be, neat and useful. The gentleman's secretary, too, is a model of compactness and utility combined with a proper degree of elegance. The projecting leaf moulding at the bottom is the only objectionable feature. The corner wash-stand is, as to its body, an excellent design; the back is a useful protection for the wall; but, according to modern requirements, the basin seems much too small. The legs are of the compromise sort. They would be vastly more in keeping if they had continued straight to the floor; the curve, which was probably intended to beautify the whole design, only weakens it, and looks like an awkward affectation of French grace.



OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE. CORNER WASH-STAND. BY SHERATON.

The two night tables by Ince and Mayhew show, that to the right the pure French style; that to the left the English taste in an uncommonly straightforward example. Nothing has here been borrowed of the French but its lightness and finish. The geometrical tracery is not put out of countenance by the very discreet introduction of rococo foliage scrolls at the feet and supporting the raised parts of the slight rail. One feels how much more *comfortable* an object it is than its neighbor, which, though really as soundly built, has an air of being in full dress, and not to be familiarly treated. The supper Canterbury and stand by Sheraton are likewise simple and of a sturdy elegance. It is such pieces as these that account for and maintain the fame of eighteenth-century English furniture.

ROGER RIORDAN.

IN his recent publication, "Old Country Life," Mr. S. Baring Gould gives some delightful pictures of the quaint mansions in England, many of the same as old as the time of the Stuarts. The Athenæum, in an extended notice of the book, says: "Our forefathers were not architectural antiquaries, but it would seem that a knowledge of the art of building was far more common among them than it is among their successors, and Mr. Baring Gould has done uninformed readers a service in impressing on them how preferable tapestry and panelling are to paint and paper. The former add to the warmth of a room, the latter detract from it. This is obvious when explained, but few of the general public have ever thought about the matter, though every one must have known of it two hundred years ago. Old houses are often spoken of as badly built because the walls, though very thick, are found to be filled with loose stones. This must have resulted from ignorance or carelessness, we are told, but Mr. Baring Gould points out that the reason was a very good one. The hollows in the middle kept out the damp. Let such a wall be kept dry at the top and it will last forever."

WAX OR ENCAUSTIC PAINTING.

WAX painting, or, as it is sometimes called, encaustic, has certain qualities not easily attainable in oil, and its durability is beyond all question. One of the recent discoveries in Egypt has been that of a large number of portraits painted in wax on panels, which cannot be of later origin than two or three centuries after Christ. Yet we are told that their colors were remarkably fresh, for the most part seeming to have changed as little as a mosaic or a fresco.

There are two ways of using wax paint, hot and cold. The former is that followed by the ancients, and properly called encaustic. It is applicable to any sort of surface which hot wax medium will penetrate, but it is troublesome. The latter is almost like painting in oil, except that it gives much richer textures, leads to bolder and broader work and allows the employment of colors which would be very unsafe in oil. On the other hand, it is difficult to secure high finish, and, as glazing is not admissible, it is useless to make many distinctions of tone in the shadows. Delicate work is of value only in the lights; the half shades must be massed as much as possible, and the shadows may as well be painted in unbroken flat tones, for the colors "sink in" as they do in oil, and the use of varnish to bring them out would destroy the "flat" effect which is the great merit of the process. A wax painting should have no gloss, and should be equally visible from any point of view. This quality and the broad treatment which it exacts of the painter make it particularly suitable for large decorative works.

What are needed are colors in powder, the dark colors carefully chosen, few and very distinct from one another; the light colors numerous and brilliant. Beside these, one will want stiff bristle brushes, a few sable pencils for outlining, and the materials of which to compose the medium. These last are, white wax, eight to ten parts; resin, two parts; spirits of turpentine, sixteen parts. These must be put into a closed vessel, which is to be plunged into another larger vessel containing boiling water, and must be kept there until the wax and resin are dissolved. The solution will be about as stiff as flour paste. The dry colors are to be stirred into it and well blended with a large spatula. The prepared colors may then be kept in cans, but must be mixed with more turpentine from time to time as they grow too dry for use.

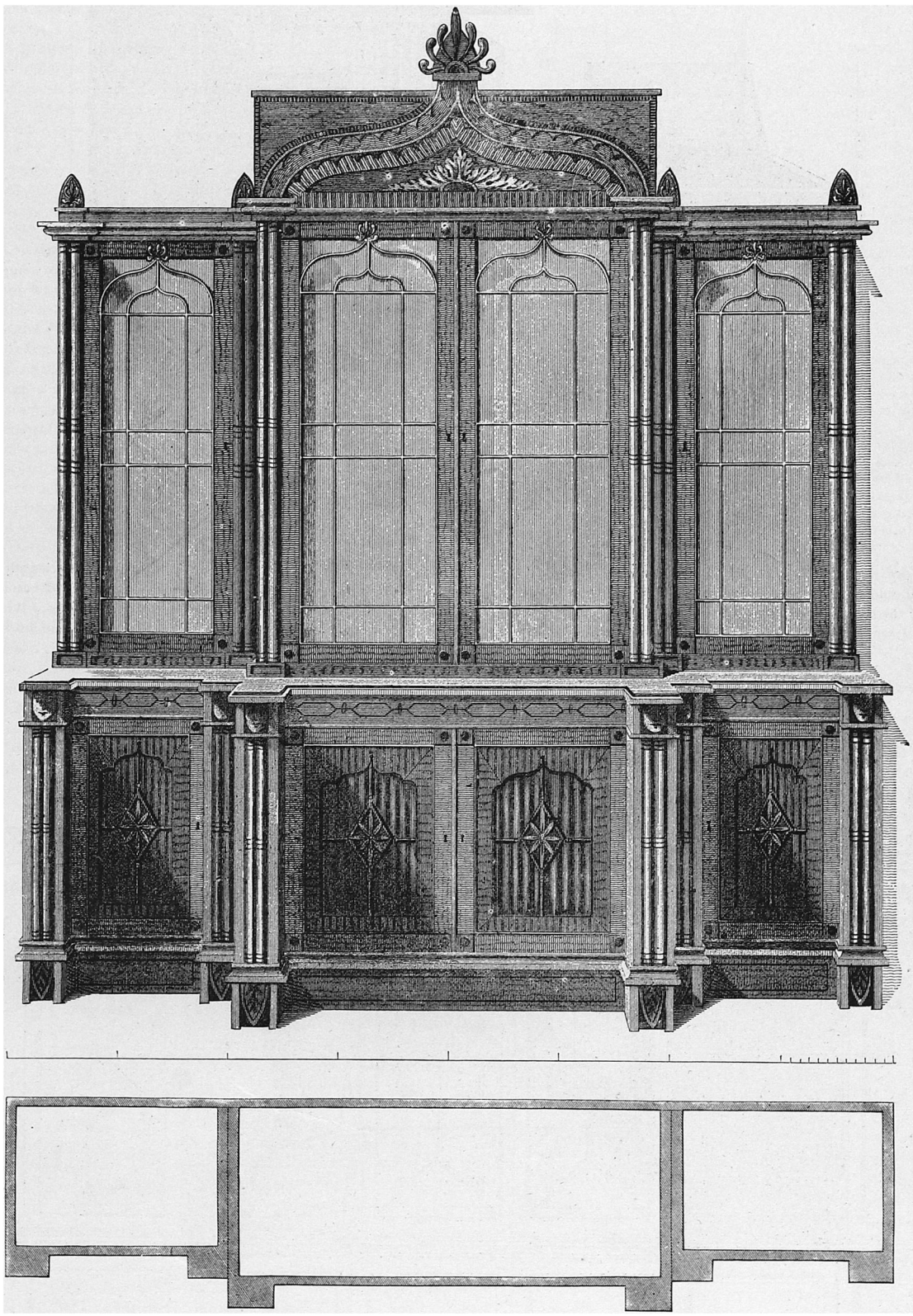
By the old method the painting was done on a plastered wall or on a panel first coated with fine plaster of Paris. A quantity of the medium was prepared, but with more than double the proportion of turpentine given above. A small chafing-dish was used to heat the surface of the wall or panel, which got several coats of the hot medium before the actual painting was commenced. This hot liquid medium penetrated the pores of the plaster, and the colors, being applied hot from first to last, were thoroughly incorporated with it and with the plaster. The color was put on with brushes or with a palette-knife; but it was blended by means of heated metal tools which were not unlike our burnishing tools. So worked, very brilliant coloring is secured and absolute permanence.

At the present time the cauterium and the heated tools are dispensed with in wax painting, and canvas prepared in the ordinary manner is preferred to panel. The wax paints are thinned as much as is requisite by the addition of spike oil, which is extremely volatile, and leaves the

paint in half an hour or so perfectly dead and mat. It may be used freely; there is no danger of its resulting in foxiness. The first painting may be all in very thin washes, which dry immediately, and may be modified at pleasure. Lights may be taken out with spike oil, and corrections are easily made. Over this one proceeds by scumbling the intermediate tones, and this stage of the work should be allowed to stand for the shadows and reflected lights. The lights are painted solidly, and, as before observed, the higher the key the more delicate the gradations. Employed in impasto, wax paint covers very thoroughly. It is a mode of painting peculiarly suitable to beginners, forcing them to paint in masses, to obtain transparency without the use of shiny media and to work in a key as nearly as possible that of nature.

IN The Philadelphia Carpet Trade, Herant M. Kiretchjian gives the following interesting account of the "antique Oriental rug:" "The Oriental rug is the product of Eastern life. The mountain sheep supplied in abundance the fine wool thread for material, nature taught the design and gave the coloring, and the religion of the people became the impulse and guiding spirit of the deft woman fingers that through many centuries spread the knotted mystic cover in the homes and shrines of the Orient; thence it is now transported to foreign climes, to lie in uncongenial surroundings on unhallowed ground and long for the fond caress that has made its face to glow through a thousand tints, like the dawn on the native hills. The people eat, drink, work and think, in whole and in detail, according to the dictates of their traditional faith, and, though the idea of utility may have largely entered some time into the production of rugs, the dominant spirit of the work has been religion, and the rug is thus sacred in the eyes of the people. (There are, in fact, few things in the Orient which are not sacred in the eyes of the people.) In the prayer-rug of the Islam centre various sacred ideas. He bows down before his Maker, and the material on which he rests his hands ere he lifts them up to cover his face must be susceptible to spotless cleanliness; he wants to find himself in an atmosphere of high thoughts and sacred suggestions, and as he looks down he sees the living green and crimson —symbols of life and power—mingled in all mystic figures with blue and gold, that carry to him faint ideas of love and glory. At home in the rooms where the morning sun looks in the pious Turk finds in his prayer-rug the associations of the mosques in his native city—or of the holiest of holies where he prayed in his pilgrimage to Mecca—in the form of domes and panels, and the designs of encaustic tiles, and peculiar arrangements of stone and brick in the walls, so that wherever the worshipping Turk, man or woman, may be found kneeling upon a prayer-rug against the Eastern sky, the soul finds itself in the midst of sacred associations and breathes the holy atmosphere of the temple where it has prayed with the congregations of the faithful. Thus dignified, the rug became a great institution among the peoples of the Orient, both Moslem and Christian, and industry, time and talent have been devoted to it for centuries. By reason of the high value thus put upon a good rug, the mothers and daughters of the people who set themselves to the arduous task of "tying up" a rug spared no pains in procuring the best materials, and their zeal developed the highest talent. In many cases the rugs were made for gifts to relatives or superiors, and it was a labor of love performed with a good heart. They were also made for votive offerings to mosques and shrines; then nothing was to be spared. Ruskin's Lamp of Sacrifice was there in all its brightness. It is a gift to God, and must be costly—the finest wool, the best of dyes and the highest talent were put upon the altar, and some of these Kazak or Daghestan rugs that stray out of a Turkish mosque or shrine are splendid works of art, with an exuberance of rich, soft coloring and bold design that delights the eyes and calls forth the admiration of appreciative minds.

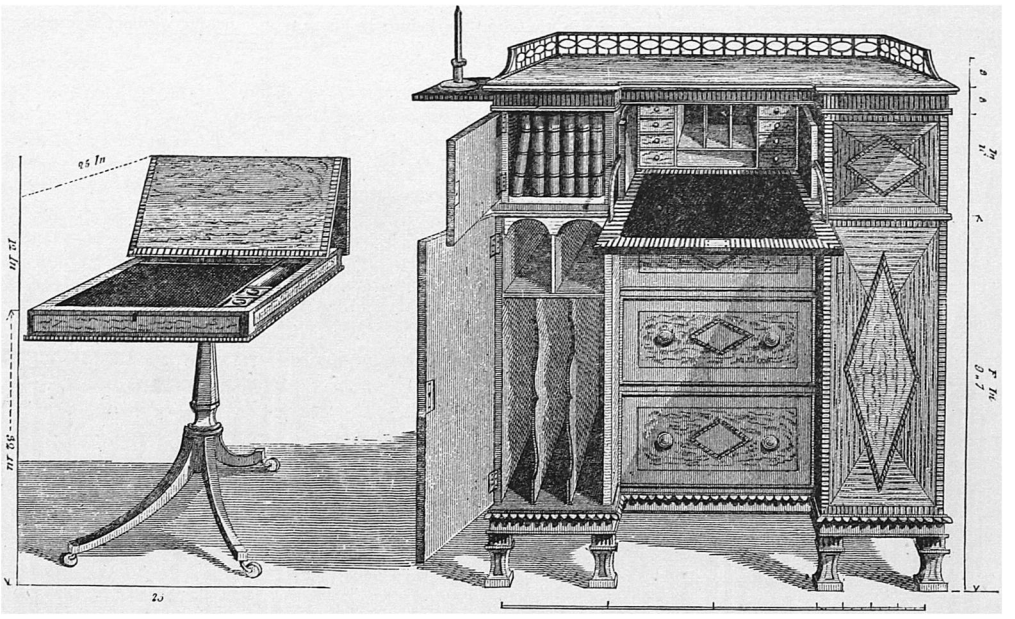
"There is no complicated machinery in the manufacture of an Oriental rug, the warp being stretched on a simple frame, and all the rest of the work done by tying the colored yarn across the warp, in a line, in a peculiar strong knot, combing it down hard and cutting it the necessary length. Where each particular tuft of yarn had thus to be tied in a knot by the skilful fingers of the artist weaver, a medium-sized rug of good quality required the labor of months and years, according to the simple or elaborate design which the artist carried in mind. Considering the fact that there was no proper machinery, no chemicals, no shadow of an art school, an antique Oriental rug of fair quality, that in color and texture has defied the tread of centuries, is no mean proof of the patient industry and consummate artistic skill of the daughters of the Orient.



OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE. BOOKCASE. DESIGNED BY SHERATON.

(SEE PAGE 50.)

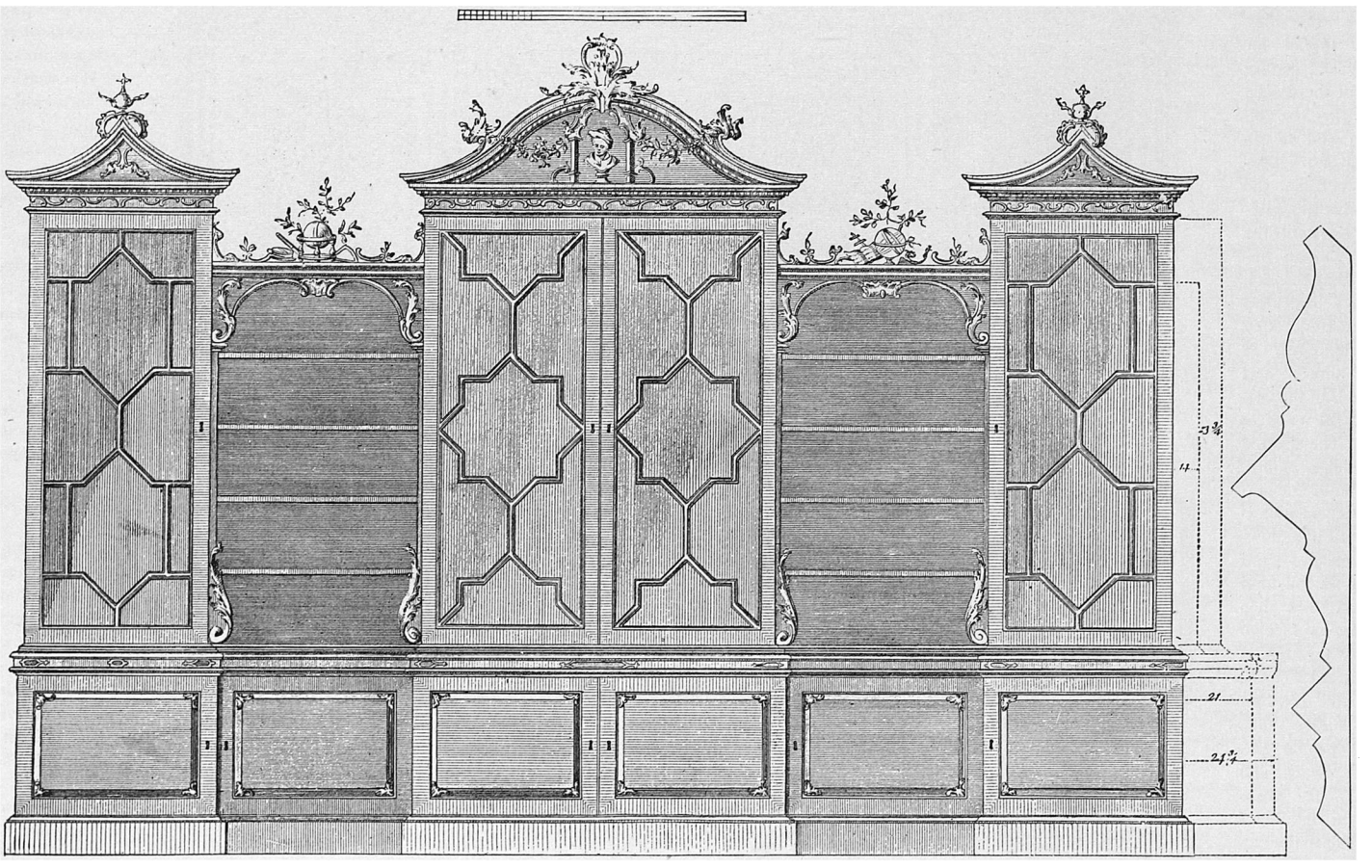
"Old and worn out down to the warp, as it often is, the Oriental rug can often stand the severest test. Soaked in water, exposed to sunshine, rain or storm, with all the dust and sand of the mountains blown into it while in transit from the native regions to the seashore—often a journey of forty days and forty nights—the rug seems to be unconscious, and then wakes up with a fresher glow of life. Professor William Thompson tells of an Oriental rug which the family had in his boyhood in Syria. It had done service of all kinds long enough to be torn in two, and the half rug used to go to the seashore with the boys, to receive no gentle treatment. When soiled with earth it would be washed in salt sea-water and thrown on the burning sands to dry under the Syrian sun, that can bleach anything; but the only effect of the ordeal on the half rug would be to give the colors new life. What is the intrinsic value of the antique rug? Answer he who can. That soft, glossy, Anatolian prayer-rug, with fine intricate design bordering the rich gold ground, all in immortal colors, is the handiwork of the passionate maiden, who spent years of patient toil on it, while before her mind stood the distant vision of a mother kneeling on that rug in ardent prayer for her children. That rug could hardly be produced to-day for its weight in gold, for not only the artist and the dyes are gone forever, but the patriarchal days of peace and quiet prosperity that made such art and labor possible are no more to be found under Turkish skies. The old family relic is now brought out to the gaze of the world, to become an object of greedy barter between Jew and Gentile; but though the poor woman will often have tears in thus parting with her rug, thousands of these rugs have become the means of supplying the necessities of many a poor family in the day of adversity, like the corn once garnered in Egypt in the years of abundance. But the stream of antique rugs, already running low, will some time dry up, and it will soon be no easy matter to procure an invoice of antique Oriental rugs.



OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE. LADY'S WRITING-DESK AND GENTLEMAN'S SECRETARY.

(SEE PAGE 50.)

"Turkish rugs of the highest quality have always been made in the region of the Caucasus Mountains, by the Turks, Armenians, Turcomans and Kurds—the latter two being nomad races. "Daghestan" (which means "mountain region") is a generic name given in the native country to all close-woven, heavy, fine-wool rugs, which would naturally be made in a region where a large portion of the people are occupied as shepherds, rearing flocks of fine sheep. The term "Daghestan," however, has now come to be universally applied to the finest quality of short-nap Caucasus rugs, made generally oblong in shape. "Kazak" is the name given to rugs coming from the higher mountain region, and made with heavy nap of fine wool, dyed in bright colors. The best Kazak rugs are mostly wider in proportion to length as compared with the Daghestan rug. The "Anatolian" rug is the Turkish household prayer-rug. It has a very soft, thick nap and bright colors, in Turkish taste. Persia, also, has supplied the Eastern markets with many choice rugs, but her fabrics fail in the matchless durability of the Daghestan and Kazak rugs, which seem to be un-



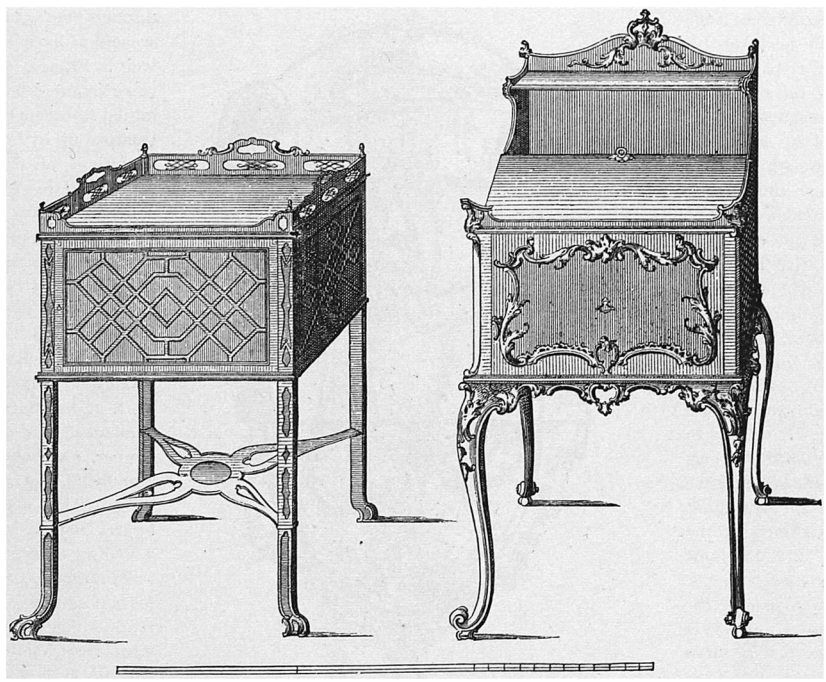
OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE. BOOKCASE FOR LIBRARY OR SIDE OF A ROOM. DESIGNED BY INCE AND MAYHEW.

(SEE PAGE 50.)

conscious of time except to catch a dim gloss from it. Further east, Bokhara and Afghanistan come with an inexhaustible supply of fine and strong rugs and carpets; but the wild, primitive life of the people living in mountain fortresses is reflected in the uniform sombre colors and monotonous design of their rugs. The antique Anatolian have a brilliant gloss. The antique Daghestan and Kazak rugs have a beautiful soft sheen, which, like that of the Anatolian rug, comes from long-continued friction while in use as prayer-rugs or sofa covers; and this gloss is so remarkably delicate and so different from artificial lustre of any kind that it gives the oriental antique rugs of good quality a well-merited high value.

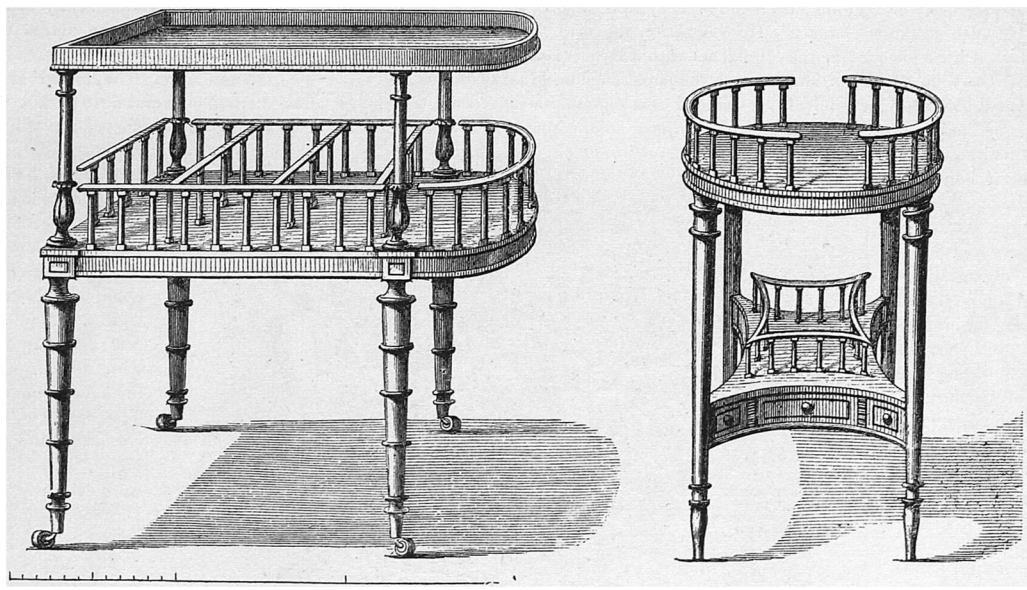
"How can a person tell a genuine Oriental rug? In the same way that he can tell a piece of classical music from 'Yankee Doodle' or the 'Old Folks at Home'—by learning to distinguish them. And there is this about it: that once the eye is accustomed to recognize the peculiar Oriental character in the rug and understand the mystic language it seems to speak, there is no making a mistake or being imposed upon. I believe the peculiar charm and characteristic of the antique Oriental rug is its perfect naturalness. The soft yet deep colors, the strength of texture, and the charming irregularity of the most perfect designs suggest the beauty of natural scenery and are equally unmistakable. I know of no imitations offered as Oriental rugs. To imitate color and texture of the antique rugs would cost more than to purchase the rugs, and as for the designs—the most perfect machine-made imitation would at once reveal a very regular irregularity. For the genuine rugs themselves, there is just this to be said, that there are Daghestans and Daghestans—just as there are Democrats and Democrats, or, for that matter, Republicans and Republicans. Turkish rugs are still made, as in the past, on the family looms of the people, every girl in the country preparing a number of fine rugs for her dower before the age of sixteen or eighteen years (many girls being given in marriage even earlier). What are known as 'royal antique rugs' are the rare rugs thus made by the early princesses of the various clans in the country, in accordance with the custom of the people and as a royal recreation. Modern princesses of the East seek a less laborious recreation by investing in the luxuries of the Western world. The fine antique Daghestan, Kazak, and Anatolian rugs were woven a century or more ago by the daughters of the wealthier families in the country, and, being carefully used by several succeeding generations as family relics, have been handed down to the present owners, who now dispose of them, generally by reason of want, and in some cases as a favor to the native buyer. The wool of these rugs is colored by fast vegetable dyes, the preparation of the various colors being family secrets, kept through many generations and never revealed to others, so that the wool had often to be sent miles away to be dyed. Not a few of these fast native dyes are now among the lost arts. Fugitive aniline colors have largely taken their place.

"We are sometimes asked," says The (London) Athenæum, "why modern wainscot does not look so well as that of former days, and fantastic reasons have been invented to account for it. The reason is on the surface—we have no intention of perpetrating a pun—if men would look for it. New wainscot is reduced to the desired thickness by the saw; the old was riven and planed down, consequently the pattern in the wood appears to much greater advantage. There is but one argument in favor of the modern practice: it is much more economical."



OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE. NIGHT TABLES. BY INCE AND MAYHEW.

(SEE PAGE 50.)



OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE. SUPPER CANTERBURY AND STAND. BY SHERATON.

(SEE PAGE 50.)

To mend a piece of old Chinese or Japanese lacquer which has chipped away from the wood, first fill the space with white lead stiffened with copal varnish; when this is hard polish it down to the general level of the surface; then, according to the nature of the ground, color with India ink or gild, or cover with brown varnish mixed with gold dust to imitate aventurine.

THE FAMOUS "PEACOCK THRONE."

Mr. Kuntz, in his "Gems and Precious Stones," lately reviewed in The Art Amateur, mentions the famous "Peacock Throne," looted by Nadir Shah, the Persian conqueror, in the eighteenth century. Javernier, in his famous account, written in the seventeenth century, when he saw it at Delhi—it is now at the capital of Persia—says the throne was reputed to have cost about $60,000,000 of our money. Bernier reduces this to $22,500,000, and Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin, in "Persia," of Putnam's "Story of the Nations" series, puts the present value at $13,000,000 of our money. Since its completion by Shah Jehan, it has been ruthlessly despoiled of its treasures from time to time; but it is still without an equal in the annals of sumptuary art. We give below the graphic account of the Peacock Throne as translated by Dr. Bull in his recent publication in English of Javernier's travels in the East:

"The principal throne, which is placed in the hall of the first court, is nearly of the form and size of our camp beds; that is to say, it is about 6 feet long and 4 wide. Upon the four feet, which are very massive, and from 20 to 25 inches high, are fixed the four bars which support the base of the throne, and upon these bars are raised twelve columns, which sustain the canopy on three sides, there not being any on that which faces the court. Both the feet and the bars, which are more than 18 inches long, are covered with gold inlaid and enriched with numerous diamonds, rubies and emeralds. In the middle of each bar there is a large balass ruby cut en cabuchon, with four emeralds round it, which form a square cross. Next in succession, from one side to the other along the length of the bars, there are similar crosses, arranged so that in one the ruby is in the middle of four emeralds, and in another the emerald is in the middle and four balass rubies surround it. . . . I counted the large balass rubies on the great throne, and there are about 108, all cabuchons, the least of which weighs 100 carats, but there are some which weigh, apparently, 200 and more. As for the emeralds, there are plenty of good color, but they have many flaws; the largest may weigh 60 and the least 30 carats. I counted about 116. . . . The under side of the canopy is covered with diamonds and pearls, with a fringe of pearls all round; and above the canopy, which is a quadrangular-shaped dome, there is to be seen a peacock, with elevated tail, made of blue sapphires and other colored stones, the body being of gold inlaid with precious stones, having a large ruby in front of the breast, from whence hangs a pear-shaped pearl of 50 carats or thereabouts, and of a somewhat yellow water. On both sides of the peacock is a large bouquet of the same height as the bird, and consisting of many kinds of flowers made of gold inlaid with precious stones. On the side of the throne which is opposite the court there is to be seen a jewel consisting of a diamond of from 80 to 90 carats weight, with rubies and emeralds round it. . . . But that which, in my opinion, is the most costly thing about this magnificent throne is that the twelve columns supporting the canopy are surrounded with beautiful rows of pearls, which are round and of fine water, and weigh from 6 to 8 carats each."

To clean engravings, expose them to muriatic acid fumes and wash with water. A drop of aqua-fortis immediately followed by a little water will remove ink stains.

BENVENUTO CELLINI.

CELLINI'S autobiography is one of the books which the student of Renaissance art cannot possibly do without reading. His frankness in recounting certain passages in his life which do him little honor, while it may deter readers who require the book world to be different from the actual, will be taken by others as a mark of veracity. Cellini was passionate, vindictive and vainglorious, and he gave full rein to all his appetites. He shows us his own weaknesses with little appearance of shame, and those of his acquaintances without a grain of mercy; but though we may be obliged to take some of his assertions with reserve and to pass by others, at least we can have no doubt of his intention to tell the exact truth about the events of an extremely interesting life. His narrative has been twice translated into English—first by Roscoe and more recently by John Addington Symonds, the author of "The Renaissance in Italy." This latest and best translation is published by Scribner & Welford.

To prevent misapprehension on the part of the reader we may say that the illustrations accompanying the present notice do not appear in the book. It seemed to us, though, worth while collecting them from the various sources laid under contribution for the purpose, for we missed them ourselves in reading this delightful volume and could but indulge the hope that something of the kind might appear in a future edition; and this hope will probably be shared by the average reader.

Cellini was born in Florence in the first year of the sixteenth century. His father, Giovanni Cellini, was a maker of musical instruments, which were then often finely carved and inlaid with ivory and ebony. He tried hard to rouse a musical enthusiasm in Benvenuto; his strongest desire was to have him become a great composer; but the son took, instead, to drawing and modelling, and was, after much entreaty, allowed to learn the goldsmith's trade from a neighbor.

He soon gained a certain measure of reputation, and, his wild disposition driving him to seek adventure out of Florence, he made his way to Rome, at the age of nineteen, in company with another youth, and readily found work there. His first job, it is worth while stating, was a little silver box copied from an antique porphyry sarcophagus, which stood before the door of the Rotunda. It was to serve as a salt-cellar. Cellini added many ornaments of his own invention to it, and his new master took it about to his acquaintances, bragging of his Florentine workman. He also occupied himself making drawings from Michael Angelo's works in the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's in the Villa Farnesina, and struck up a friendship with Gian Francesco, a pupil of the latter. His talents became known to Pope and cardinals, and before long he had so many commissions that he thought it better to open a shop for himself. Of the many beautiful things which he describes as being made by him at this period were a little silver vase, which the owner, a doctor, afterward sold for an antique, and a gold medal for a cardinal, to be worn strung on his hat-band. The doctor paid for his vase by professional services rendered during the plague, one other anecdote of which reads much like the opening of Boccacio's "Decamerone." It is a story of an artist's merry-making, at which were present Michael Angelo, Giulio Romano, the painter, and the afore-mentioned Gian Francesco. Each brought a lady to the feast, and Cellini, having no lady friend, dressed up a handsome youth of his neighborhood in robes and jewels, and arranged his long hair so well that, against the background of flowering jasmines in the arbor where they dined, he seemed the prettiest young woman of the party.

About this time Cellini taught himself damascening, having purchased some Turkish daggers, so ornamented, which fell in his way; and he tells us that the Turkish designs were merely of some oblong leaves and some small flowers, like a sunflower, while he wrought in this way the Lombard patterns of briony and ivy leaves, and the Tuscon and Roman acanthus scrolls, with grotesque forms drawn from the snap-dragon and other like plants. At this time, too, he came upon a treasure of small antique urns, filled with ashes, and among the ashes iron rings inlaid with gold for talismans. Cellini set to making inlaid iron finger rings in imitation of them, and succeeded in reintroducing the fashion into Rome.

Readers of Byron will remember the account of the Constable de Bourbon's attack on Rome in "The Deformed Transformed." Cellini claims to have been the man who shot the Constable. He afterward made one of the garrison of the castle of St. Angelo, and he gives a curious account of what went on inside the castle during the siege, when he was thrown into intimate relations with Pope Clement VII. and his chief advisers The Pope got him to melt down the gold settings of some of his jewels, a job that afterward cost him dear He was also engaged to make the button of sculptured gold, set with a large diamond, which is still in use to fasten the papal cope on great occasions.

ARMS OF BENVENUTO CELLINI.

FACSIMILE OF A SKETCH BY HIM.

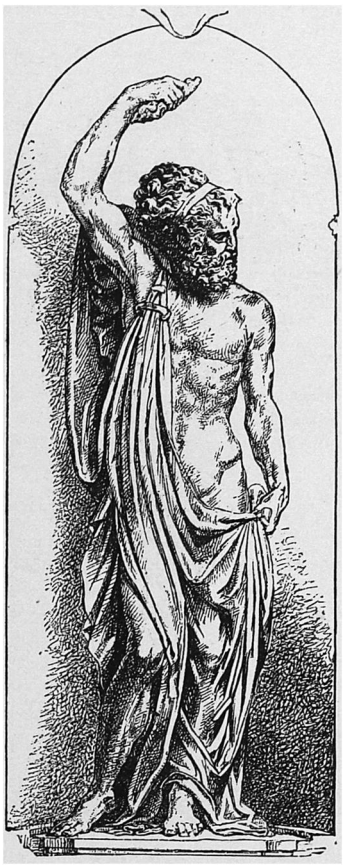
Cellini's next remarkable adventure was in an affair with a conjuror in the ruins of the Coliseum, at midnight. They attempted to discover by necromancy the whereabouts of a girl with whom he had fallen in love. They were driven from the Coliseum by a legion of devils; but he afterward met by chance with his inamorata while he was fleeing from Rome because of an assault he had committed on a notary. He, however, shortly returned to Rome, and during the state of lawlessness following the Pope's death murdered his accuser in the former affair. The new Pope, Paul III., for a time ignored this misdeed and continued to employ him.

SALT-CELLAR. BY BENVENUTO CELLINI.

IN THE IMPERIAL TREASURE CHAMBER IN VIENNA.

Being led to suspect that some persons of the papal court were plotting his downfall, Cellini ran away to France. He gives a minute account of his passage through Switzerland, whose lakes, mountains and storms seemed to have impressed him greatly. He did not stay long in France, in this, his first sojourn there. He once more ventured back to Rome, and soon after was committed to prison on a variety of charges, some true, some trumped up by his enemies. The tale of his prison life, his visions, his poetry, his escapes and recaptures would furnish matter for a three-volume romance. The Cardinal of Ferara, as ambassador from Francis I., of France, at last procured his release. King Francis gave him the same salary he had paid to Lionardo da Vinci, seven hundred crowns a year; he was given the castle known as La Tour de Nesle, on the outskirts of Paris, as his habitation, was naturalized a Frenchman, and set to work on certain life-size silver figures of gods and goddesses, to be used as candelabra. While he was at work at his models Francis would often visit him unannounced, and on one occasion, Cellini, being in a bad temper, gave one of his assistants a kick which sent him flying, so that he fell up against the King, just as the latter had opened the door. Besides the three silver figures which he completed, he cast the celebrated "Nymph of Fontainebleau," now in the Louvre, a high relief intended to represent Diana, some colossal figures for a fountain, and the splendid silver-gilt salt-cellar representing Earth and Sea, which is now in the Imperial Treasure Chamber in Vienna. The salt-cellar, which, with the exception of the Perseus at Florence, is the most important of the existing works of Cellini, is illustrated below. It was commenced at the instance of the Cardinal of Ferrara, who had assisted Cellini out of prison. The cardinal had desired something out of the common, and Cellini tells exactly how he set about his design. "I first laid down," he says, "an oval framework," almost two thirds of a cubit long it was; and upon this, "wishing to suggest the interminglement of land and ocean," he modelled the two figures which we see. They are seated with their legs interlaced, to symbolize the interlocking of bays and promontories. In the left hand of the man, who stood for the sea, was originally placed a ship, intended to hold the salt. Beneath him were grouped four sea-horses. The Earth had a richly decorated temple firmly based on the ground by her side, where in the actual work is a triumphal arch. This was for the pepper. In the other hand was a cornucopia. The model in wax was so loaded with ornaments and little figures that some of the cardinal's advisers, ill-affected toward Cellini, found no difficulty in persuading him that it was impossible to execute it in a life-time. The cardinal himself thought it likely to be too expensive for him to undertake the cost of; so it was executed for King Francis. It was after obtaining the gold for it that Cellini was set upon by robbers as he was returning by night from the treasury to his castle. He describes it as of solid gold worked entirely with the chisel, and in parts enamelled of the natural colors of the objects introduced. The base was of ebony, with a projecting cornice framing in four golden figures—Night, Day, Twilight and Dawn. They were evidently suggested by the Night and Day of Michael Angelo. The four other figures were intended for the four winds.

The affairs of his family brought the sculptor back to Florence in 1545. Here Duke Cosmo de Medici employed him to make the well-known Perseus, which until quite recently stood in the Loggia de' Lanzi, but is now in the Bargello Museum, having been replaced by a copy. This was to be the duke's answer to the Judith of Donatello, symbolizing justifiable regicide, and the David of Michael Angelo, which meant overbearing might destroyed by right. In the Perseus the Gorgon was supposed to represent the republican faction. The sculptor tells us how he was many times interrupted in this important work, to take up



THE FIGURE OF JUPITER ON THE "PERSEUS" PEDESTAL.

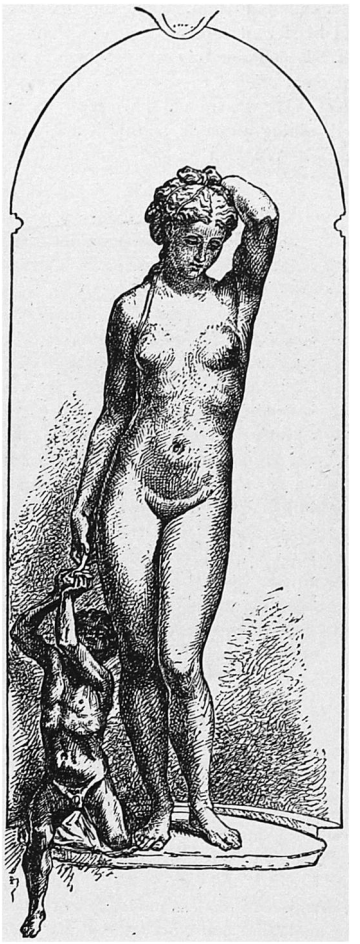
PERSEUS WITH THE GORGON'S HEAD.

THE FAMOUS BRONZE GROUP

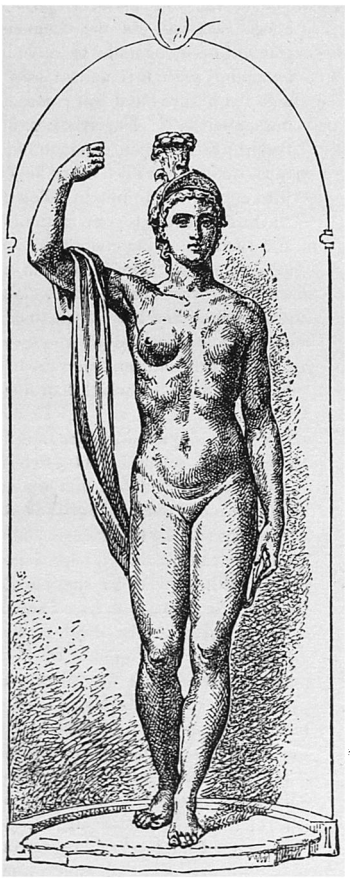
BY BENVENUTO CELLINI

IN THE VECCHIO PALAZZO, FLORENCE.

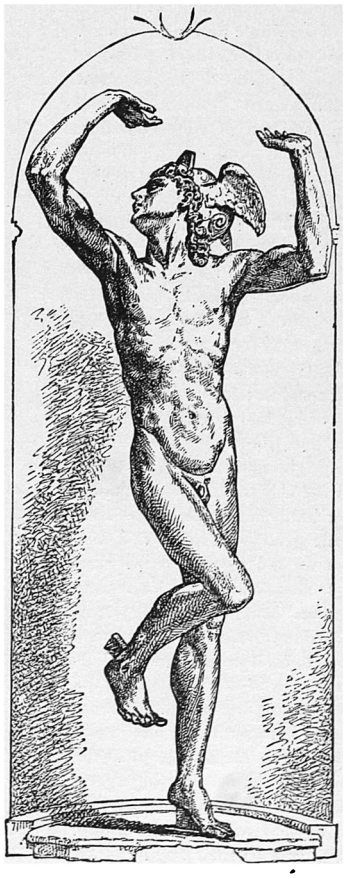
THE FIGURES ON THE PEDESTAL ARE SHOWN IN DETAIL ON EITHER SIDE OF THE PAGE.



GROUP OF DANÆ AND HER SON PERSEUS ON THE "PERSEUS" PEDESTAL.

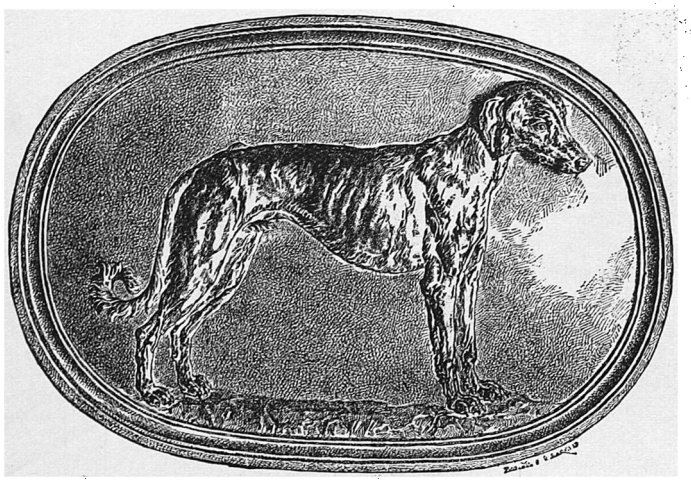


THE FIGURE OF MINERVA ON THE "PERSEUS" PEDESTAL.



THE FIGURE OF MERCURY ON THE "PERSEUS" PEDESTAL.

other matters. The bronze relief of a dog, which we illustrate, was made at this time. On one occasion Cellini went to the palace after dinner, on a feast-day, and the duke, calling to him, asked him to look at a box that had been sent him by Stefano Colonna, Lord of Palestrina. It contained an antique torso in marble, and Cellini at once offered to restore its lacking head, hands and feet. He was much taken with its beauty, and proposed adding an eagle, so that it might answer for a Ganymede. We wish we had room to reproduce

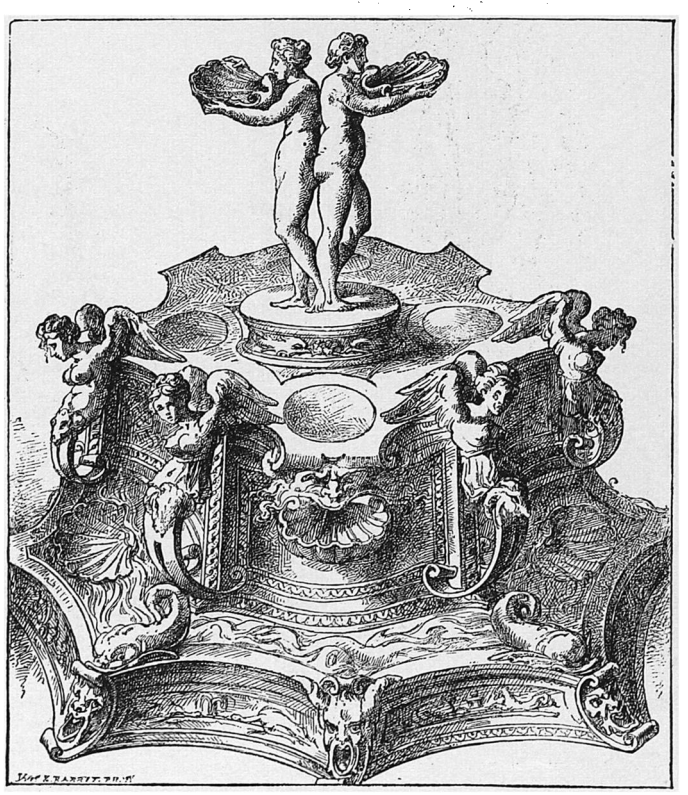


BRONZE BY BENVENUTO CELLINI.

IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, FLORENCE.

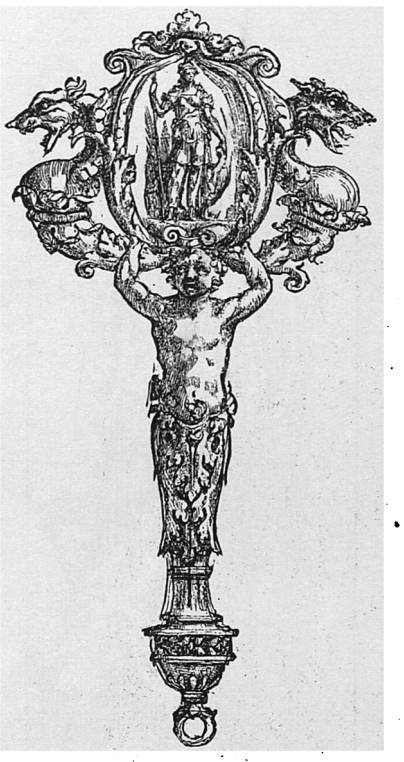
Nicola Sanesi's drawing of the restored figure as a contrast to the Perseus, this restored antique being as remarkable for breadth and easy grace as the Perseus is for finish of details and restless movement of line. The duke, having made him point out one by one the beauties of the torso, Zaccio Bandinelli, who happened to come in, took the opposite side, and proclaimed his opinion that the ancients knew nothing of anatomy. This led to an animated discussion, which ended in Cellini's pointing out the many faults of Bandinelli's Hercules and Cacus, speaking as though in the name of the whole Florentine school. The diatribe is too interesting to pass over without quoting a part. "This excellent school," Cellini averred, "says that if one were to shave the hair of your Hercules, there would not be skull enough left to hold his brain; it says that it is impossible to distinguish whether his features are those of a man, or of something between a lion and an ox; the face, too, is turned away from the action of the figure, and is so badly set upon the neck, with such poverty of art and so ill a grace, that nothing worse was ever seen; his sprawling shoulders are like the two pommels of an ass's pack-saddle; his breasts and all the muscles of his body are not portrayed from a man, but from a big sack full of melons set upright against a wall." While working on the Ganymede he also undertook another statue in marble, a Narcissus, and a marble group of Apollo and Hyacinth. But we must come to the casting of the Perseus, the most interesting passage in the book. We shall give it as far as possible verbatim, as a specimen of the translator's style. Cellini had already cast the body of the Medusa, but the Perseus was a more difficult undertaking. It was to be cast from the wax and in one piece, including the Medusa head in the grasp of the right hand. Having everything ready, he provided himself with several loads of pinewood for the firing: "While these were on their way I clothed my Perseus with the clay which I had prepared many months beforehand, in order that it might be duly seasoned. After making its clay tunic (for that is the term used in this art) and properly arming it and fencing it with iron girders, I began to draw the wax out by means of a slow fire. This melted and issued through numerous air-vents I had made; for the more there are of these the better will the mould fill. When I had finished drawing off the wax I constructed a funnel-shaped furnace all around the model of my Perseus. It was built of bricks so interlaced, the one above the other, that numerous apertures were left for the fire to exhale at. Then I began to lay on wood by degrees, and kept it burning two whole days and nights. At length, when all the wax was gone and the mould was well baked, I set to work at digging the pit in which to sink it. This I performed with scrupulous regard to all the rules of art. When I had finished that part of my work I raised the mould by windlasses and stout ropes to a perpendicular position, and suspending it with the greatest care one cubit above the level of the furnace, so that it hung exactly above the middle of the pit. I next lowered it gently down into the very bottom of the furnace, and had it firmly placed with every possible precaution for its safety. When this delicate operation was accomplished I began to bank it up with the earth I had excavated; and ever as the earth grew higher I introduced its proper air-vents, which were little tubes of earthenware, such as folk use for drains and such like purposes." [Here the translator adds in a note that these air-vents "were introduced into the outer mould, which Cellini calls the *tonica*, laid upon the original model." But this cannot be, since the "tunic" was already baked hard and had already been supplied with its own proper air-vents. These new air-vents were in the outside banking of earth, and must have been continuous with those in the "tunic." It will be noticed also that the pit into which the mould was lowered is once or twice confounded with the furnace.]

"I next turned to my furnace, which I had filled with numerous pigs of copper and other bronze stuff. The



DESIGN FOR A SALT-CELLAR. BY BENVENUTO CELLINI.

pieces were piled according to the laws of art—that is to say, so resting one upon the other that the flames could play freely through them, in order that the metal might heat and liquefy the sooner. At last I called out heartily to set the furnace going." The draught was so great that the workshop took fire, while at the same time a storm of wind and rain blew in from the garden, cooling the furnace. Cellini had a fit of fever, and while the



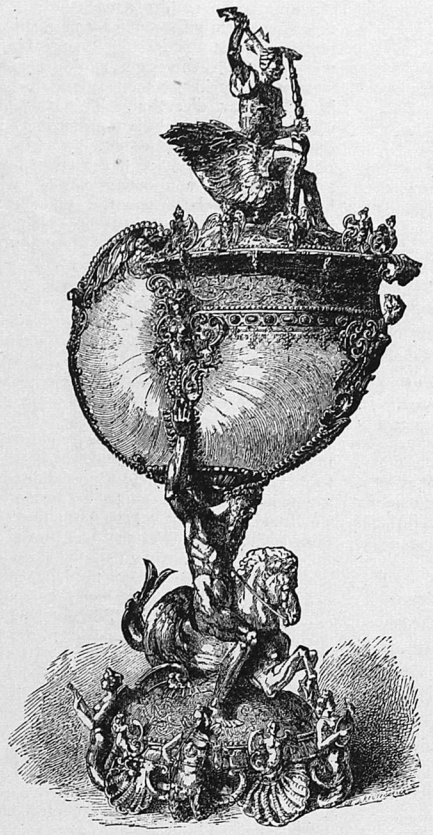
DRAWING FOR A JEWEL. BY BENVENUTO CELLINI.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

work was still doubtful was obliged to go and lie down upon his bed. He directed his best apprentice: "'Look, my dear Bernardino, that you observe the rules that I have taught you; do your best with all despatch, for the metal will soon be fused; you cannot go wrong; these honest men will get the channels ready; you will easily be able to drive back the two plugs with this pair of iron crooks; and I am sure that my mould will fill miraculously.'" Nevertheless, in his fever, he saw the figure of a man twisted into the form of a capital S enter his chamber, who announced to him in a doleful voice: "'Oh Benvenuto! your statue is spoiled, and there is no hope whatever of saving it.'" Jumping from his bed in a fury, he went to inspect the furnace. The metal was cooling and had begun to cake. He obtained another load of wood, cleared up the channels and sent men upon the roof to put out the fire which had made headway there.

We again quote Mr. Symonds: "I then ordered half a pig of pewter to be brought, which weighed about sixty pounds, and flung it into the middle of the cake inside the furnace. By this means, and by piling on wood, and stirring now with pokers and now with iron rods, the curdled mass rapidly began to liquefy. Then, knowing I had brought the dead to life again, against the firm opinion of those ignoramuses, I felt such vigor fill my veins, that all those pains of fever, all those fears of death, were quite forgotten.

"All of a sudden an explosion took place, attended by a tremendous flash of flame, as though a thunderbolt had formed and been discharged among us. Unwonted and appalling terror astonished every one, and me even more than the rest. When the din was over and the dazzling light extinguished, we began to look each other in the face. Then I discovered that the cap of the furnace had blown up, and the bronze was bubbling over from its source beneath. So I had the mouths of my mould immediately opened, and at the same



NAUTILUS SHELL, WITH SILVER GILT MOUNTINGS.

IN THE ROYAL COLLECTION, WINDSOR CASTLE.

(GERMAN WORK.)

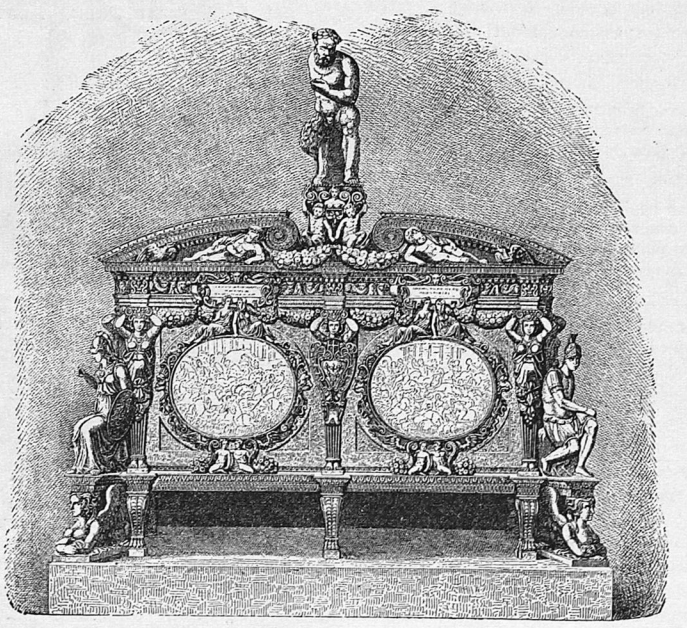
ROCK CRYSTAL COUPE, MOUNTED IN GOLD, ENAMELLED.

IN LORD SALISBURY'S COLLECTION.

(ITALIAN WORK OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.)

GOLD ENAMELLED FLACON.

IN THE PITTI PALACE.



THE FARNESE CASKET.

IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAPLES.

FAMOUS OBJECTS OF THE GOLDSMITH'S ART, ERRONEOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO BENVENUTO CELLINI.

time drove in the two plugs which kept back the molten metal. But I noticed that it did not flow as rapidly as usual, the reason being probably that the fierce heat of the fire we kindled had consumed its base alloy. Accordingly I sent for all my pewter platters, porringers and dishes, to the number of some two hundred pieces, and had a portion of them cast, one by one, into the channels, the rest into the furnace. This expedient succeeded, and every one could now perceive that my bronze was in most perfect liquefaction, and my mould was filling; whereupon they all with heartiness and happy cheer assisted and obeyed my bidding, while I, now here, now there, gave orders, helped with my own hands and cried aloud: 'O God! Thou that by Thy immeasurable power didst rise from the dead, and in Thy glory didst ascend to Heaven!' . . . Even thus in a moment my mould was filled; and seeing my work finished, I fell upon my knees, and with all my heart gave thanks to God."

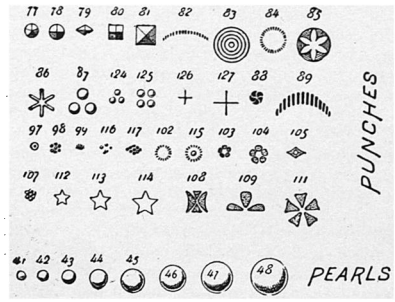
The Perseus is the best known of all Cellini's works. A crucifix in marble, now in the Escurial Palace at Madrid, was, however, rated higher by the artist himself. It was made about the same period—that is to say, between 1554 and 1560. The wax sketch model of the Perseus, preserved in the museum of the Bargello Palace, Florence, is generally held to be much finer than the famous figure itself. The statue and pedestal were unveiled on April 27, 1554. Cellini was admitted to the Florentine nobility in 1554, and we suppose it was on this occasion that he sketched the coat of arms which we illustrate. He was selected to walk in the funeral procession of Michael Angelo in 1564 as representative of the art of sculpture, but was too ill to attend. He died February 13th, 1571, nearly eight years after the termination of his memoirs. We have thought it of interest to add to our illustrations a few of the many works falsely attributed to him.

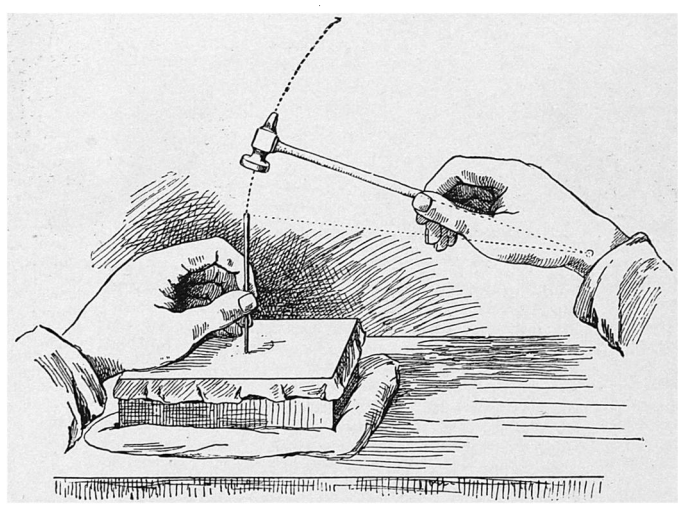
Besides illustrations, Mr. Symonds's book much needs a fuller index, and, in view of Cellini's discursive manner, it would be a great convenience to the reader if the date were given at the top of each page.

REPOUSSE METAL WORK.

II.—MATERIALS AND TOOLS.

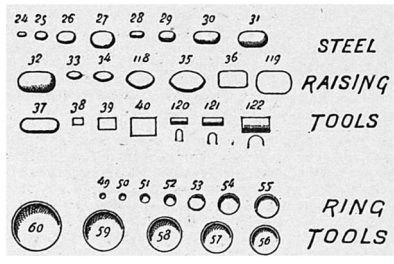
A SUITABLE metal to work upon will be the first consideration for the amateur, and it will be found that gold, silver, copper, brass and iron are all, to a certain extent, available for repoussé work. Gold, in its different alloys, is one of the best metals for the purpose of repoussé, it being extremely dense, ductile and workable; but from its cost, and the high degree of skill required to produce work of a character in keeping with the value of the material used, it is unnecessary to speak further of it here. Next in order is silver, which will prove equally as tractable as gold, and, though expensive, better calculated to meet the demands of the amateur. It is a most agreeable metal to work upon, and will, if properly prepared, to begin with, bear a large amount of expansion without cracking, a point in its favor that the amateur of no very great experience will soon learn to appreciate. When sheet silver is bought it will be found to be as hard and almost as springy as steel, and, were it to be used in this state, difficulties would arise that might end in giving rise to disgust for the work, and that would certainly cause a great loss of time and much labor. Care must be taken to anneal the silver thoroughly—an explanation of which process will follow hereafter—in order to remove the hardness induced by the rolling to which it has been subjected. This will most probably throw the plate out of the flat, which, of course, will require setting right again. It must then be rubbed with rotten-stone and water, so as to erase the bluish marks made by the steel rollers, for if these marks are not removed previous to starting repoussé, great difficulty will be experienced in removing them afterward, if, indeed, this be found at all possible, and a blemish of this nature might entirely spoil the effect of much patient work. Nothing more need be said here of this metal, as it is not recommended until the beginner has had considerable experience in copper and brass, the two metals that will prove in every way most convenient for his use, and the treatment of which it is more especially the object of this article to explain. Before passing to them it may be mentioned that both iron and soft steel are much used as materials for repoussé, and, in conjunction with other metals, produce a very beautiful result, but, as they are both of so hard a nature and somewhat intractable in a cold state, the beginner, at least, may set them aside as unavailable, especially as he will find that to reach the standard of excellence aimed at in these instructions, in copper and brass alone, will require all his attention, without the added difficulties of an awkward material to contend with. Between copper and brass there will not be very much to choose, and it may be assumed in what follows hereafter, that the methods referred to will answer in both cases, unless a different treatment for the one or the other is advised. It should, however, be noted, that as copper is the better and more valuable metal of the two, it should receive a higher degree of finish than brass. In choosing brass, bear in mind that the metal of a ruddy tint (when scraped) is generally softer and less liable to crack than that of the ordinary tone. This liability, however, depends largely on the amount of annealing it has undergone. Care should be taken, also, to select sheets free from specks and flaws, these causing disfigurement after the work is completed, not a little vexatious where much effort has been expended on the workmanship.

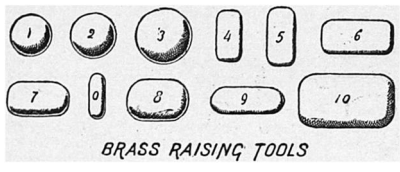




REPOUSSÉ METAL WORK. POSITION OF THE HAND.

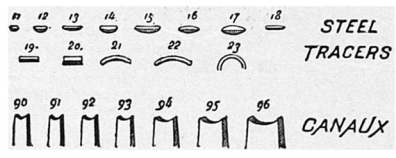
The most useful thicknesses of brass are from 26 to 22 standard wire gauge; or from 6 to 10 metal gauge.





If the repoussé is to be of a very elaborate character, and of considerable relief, the metal must be stout enough to bear, without cracking, the consequent reduction of thickness and occasional annealing. A thinner sheet can be used when the amount of hammering it has to undergo is not excessive. Copper may, with advantage, being slightly softer, be of a thicker gauge than brass. Should the reader be unable to obtain metal in flat sheets, ready for use, he will have, of course, to prepare it himself, as that supplied by dealers in rolls is too rough to be used without preparation. To do so cut off the piece required, from the roll, somewhat larger than is necessary, selecting a part free from flaws. Next thoroughly anneal the metal by making it red hot all over, and then placing it in ashes to cool slowly, or by plunging it while still red hot into water, a method followed by some engineers, but which, when applied to worked pieces causes them to run the risk of cracking by so sudden a contraction. The metal must now be carefully flattened by planishing it gently with a mallet on a flat wooden block, beginning in the centre and working out to the edges, avoiding, as much as possible, striking twice in the same place, the blows being given in a circular direction. This the beginner will find requires a great deal of care, as it is very easy to make the plate more uneven than it was before. It will often be better to bend it as flat as possible with the fingers and then rub the unevennesses out with the head of a large smooth hammer, the plate resting on the flat wooden block, than to attempt planishing it, and if the metal has been properly softened or annealed it will generally yield to this treatment.

Having said all that is needed concerning the metals, the tools required claim a little attention, and it will be as well to say frankly that "any tools" will not do, if anything worth doing is to be attempted. The right tools, properly made, will save an immense amount of trouble, and though some of them can be made by the amateur, those obtained from some good tool-shop are more likely to prove satisfactory. The purchaser should either try the tools before buying them, or get the salesman to do so for him, and the "temper" of the steel tools should be particularly examined, to see that they are neither so hard as to be liable to break almost at the first blow, nor yet so soft that the edges "turn" after a little use. When steel tools are properly tempered they usually show a gradual change from a deep blue in the centre, through straw color, to a clear polished steel tint at the point. Tracers and the finer mats and punches demand more careful tempering than other tools. All the tools should be light, convenient to handle, and from 4 to 4½ inches in length. The first requisite is a good steel or steel-faced chaser's hammer mounted on a proper handle. The heads can be bought of various weights and sizes, from 1¾ ozs. up, but are not generally used for this work above 4 ozs. For his own use the writer prefers one of 2½ to 3 ozs. The handle or stick must be of lancewood, from 7 to 9 inches in length, and very slender for a distance of about six inches, the end terminating in a knob of a flattened oval form. The illustration will give a good idea of what is meant. The great essentials in the hammer are lightness, strength and flexibility; lightness because relief is more correctly gained by a number of light blows than by a few heavy ones; flexibility to allow of greater variation in the force of the blows, and strength so that the stick may not break when a heavier blow than usual is necessary. Much more depends on this tool than might be supposed, for with an improper head clumsily mounted on a rough wooden handle, it will be impossible to arrive at any very great perfection of workmanship. The cost of a hammer of sufficiently good quality for the purpose need not be more than about 75 cents. A rawhide mallet, handled after the same manner as the hammer, will prove extremely useful both for flattening the metal and for roughly raising large surfaces, to be further worked into form afterward with hammer and tools. This should not cost more than 35 cents. Next in importance are the tracers with which the outlining and similar processes are to be done. They are straight and curved, thick and thin, and in length (of cutting edge) from $\frac{1}{32}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch, according to the fineness or boldness of the work required. The most useful are those marked from 11 to 23 in the illustration. That with which the beginner should learn to trace is numbered 16. This is an invaluable tool, and available for many purposes. Two or three curved and straight tracers are all that will be required for some time. These, which should be bought ready for use, cost about 25 cents each. A few raising tools of oval, oblong and vesica shapes and flat and bombé surfaces, the smaller ones of finely finished and tempered steel, and the larger of brass (which being softer will enable the worker to raise the metal without bruising it), and some ring tools, pearls, and mats for producing a variety of grounding and texture, are all that the beginner needs to start with—say a set of those numbered in the illustration 16, 2, 7, 43, 53, 27, 31, 35, 37, 63 and 88, which, of course, could be added to as occasion required.



Further instructions concerning tools and appliances must be reserved for another chapter.

W. E. J. GAWTHORP.